

To: Barry Phillips and Jeff Shinn

Re: Windy-Shingle Proposed Project

From: Holly Endersby hollye@hughes.net

Date: March 1, 2017

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the Windy-Shingle Project. Although I live next to Unit 11, I regularly hike throughout the project area, while birding, hunting, snowshoeing or backcountry horse riding and packing. My comments will be specific, however, to the southern end of the proposed project area, specifically Unit 11 and Unit 12B. Due to severe weather, I was unable to attend the January local meeting in Riggins.

As an avid birder, I have observed the following owl species in Unit 11 and 12B all of which need the particular habitat those large Ponderosa pines provide, interspersed with fir and native grasses and shrubs. In particular, I am concerned that logging Unit 11 and 12B will diminish habitat for long eared owls, great gray owls, great horned owls, northern pygmy owls, western screech owls and flammulated owls, all of which use this area for hunting, breeding and nesting. This forested area compliments the more open private ground adjacent to Unit 11 and is a favorite habitat of a variety of owls. The grasslands below Unit 12B sloping down towards the Rapid River offer the same open ground found next to Unit 11.

Other birds that use Unit 11 and Unit 12B include those raptors who prefer forest edges for nesting and resting. These include Merlin, American Kestrel, Sharp-Shinned Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Broad-winged Hawk and Cooper's Hawk. The areas abound with neotropicals each spring as well, some of which stay throughout the summer while others are passing through on their migratory paths. Obviously, the current forest habitat is one they need and prefer or they wouldn't be here. Each spring, turkeys frequent Unit 11 and it is not uncommon to see hens with their broods. This fall I observed four Mountain Quail for several minutes while deer hunting in Unit 11. Of course, a variety of woodpeckers, including pileated, frequent these two units as well. Disrupting the habitat these birds need will be detrimental to them.

Over the years I have also observed that elk, white tail deer, mule deer, cougar, bear and yes, wolves, frequent Unit 11 and 12B. As a hunter, I value all of these native species and feel that the current stand condition of Unit 11 and 12B are examples of a healthy forest, with ample habitat for a variety of big game. These animals use the area for thermal cover, isolation during calving and fawning for elk and deer and for food forage for all species listed. In addition, I have observed pygmy rabbits in Unit 11 as well. The small community of Riggins depends on recreation money, including big game hunting, for its economic base and anything that detracts from this has a detrimental effect on the town.

On my daily hikes through spring and summer I have noted the following native plants, all of which depend on the CURRENT forest conditions: Wood Nymph, Bunchberry, Queen's Cup, Elegant Cat's Ears, Western Wake Robin, Wartberry Fairybell, Indian Pipe, Goats Beard, Lousewort, Douglas Violet, Buckwheat, Goosefoot Violet, Yellow Bell, Yellow Fawn Lily, Alpine Shooting Star, Maiden Blue-eyed

Mary, Miner's Waterleaf, Lupine, Mountain Kittenails, Columbia Virgin's Bower, Mule's Ear, Arrowleaf Balsam Root, Heart Leafed Arnica, Meadow Rue, Spotted and Striped Coral Root, Pinedrop, Spring Beauty, Indian Paintbrush, Calypso Orchid, Prairie Smoke, Merten's Saxifrage, Twinflower, Mountain Bluebell, Clarkia, Sicky Geranium and Nutall's Larkspur. As I have not noted the date of finding each plant like I have with the birds, I may be missing a few plants, but the species listed appear every year. Unit 11 and 12B are also favorite habitats for morel mushrooms. It is my experience that when ground is disturbed through unnecessary active management, nonnative invasive plant species often appear and begin to crowd out native plants, thus upsetting the entire ecological balance of the area. Given the meager funds the government budget gives the Forest Service, I foresee invasive plants entering the area planned for treatment, with virtually no on-going treatment for weeds.

One native species that might easily be overlooked is the Pine White Butterfly, which appears each August and whose whole food source is the mature Ponderosa pine. Logging Units 11 and 12B could have a detrimental effect on these insects.

I am particularly concerned that the cutting of trees in Unit 12B will open this area to more illegal motorized incursion. We have worked hard over the years, with the help of the Forest Service, to ensure this area stays nonmotorized. Making it easier for atv and snow mobile users to circumvent the currently closed gates due to vegetation reduction would be very detrimental to native wildlife and plant species.

In conclusion, I am requesting that an on-the-ground verification for the need of treatment in Units 11 and 12B take place before any activity is sanctioned for these two areas and that I be a part of that ground-truthing. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

Sincerely,

Holly Endersby

PO Box 249

Pollock, ID 83547

Member: Friends of the Rapid River

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers-life member and former Conservation Director

Trout Unlimited-life member

Idaho Conservation League